

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-20 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(e) over Shafer et al. Applicants respectfully disagree since Applicants' claims are inherently incapable of being read upon the nested needle valve members of Shafer et al identified in the office action. In other words, when the outer needle valve member of Shafer et al. lifts, it inherently lifts the inner needle valve member with it, and thus the two needle valve members do not move with respect to one another as required by Applicants' claims. Thus, fuel injectors of the type represented by Fig. 5 of Shafer et al. are inherently incapable of meeting the requirements of method claims 1-7, since there is no way that the outer needle valve member can lift to its open position while also moving with respect to the inner needle valve member as required by Applicants' claims.

Although not discussed in the office action, Shafer et al. also teaches a fuel injector in Figures 12-15 that does not include nested needle valve members. However, Applicants' claimed methodology can not be read upon this fuel injector or its method of operation since there is no described version of the Shafer et al. Figure 12 fuel injector that allows for fuel injection in two different spray patterns by relieving pressure in two different needle control chambers, via respective electrical actuators as in Applicants' claimed invention. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that all of the outstanding §102(b) rejections against claims 1-7 be withdrawn.

In order to prevent Applicants' claims from being misread onto the Figure 12-15 embodiments of Shafer et al., Applicants have amended independent claims 8 and 15 to make it clear that the respective first and second electrical actuators are coupled to the respective first and second needle valve members via respective first and second needle control chambers. Since Shafer et al. neither shows nor suggests any such combination of features, Applicants respectfully requests that all of the outstanding §102(b) rejections based upon Shafer et al. be withdrawn.

This application is believed to be in condition for allowance of claims 1-20 however, if the Examiner believes that some minor additional clarification would put this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at (812) 333-5355 in order to hasten the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MB McNeil', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael B. McNeil

Reg. No: 35, 949